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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 11/25/09

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ARTICLES:

- (1) Okinawa worried that PM Hatoyama may accept current Futenma relocation plan in the end

ASAHI (Page 2) (Full)
November 25, 2009

Atsushi Matsukawa, Hisashi Ishimatsu, Keiichi Kaneko

A sense of alarm is spreading among ruling party Diet members elected from Okinawa who have been calling for the relocation of the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa) out of Okinawa that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama may accept relocation within the prefecture in the end. While Hatoyama has still not clarified his stance on the relocation issue, administration officials have begun to consider new measures to lighten Okinawa's burden in the event that a decision is made to relocate the Futenma base to Henoko.

On the afternoon of Nov. 24, House of Councillors member Shokichi Kina (Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ)), House of Representatives member Mikio Shimoji (People's New Party), and five other ruling party Diet members elected from Okinawa met with the Prime Minister at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei). They made a direct appeal to Hatoyama to look into the possibility of relocating Futenma out of Okinawa or out of Japan.

The letter they presented said that: "The people of Okinawa are increasingly voicing their strong disappointment and anger at this situation in which a process based on the assumption of relocation within Okinawa is moving forward." The Diet members demanded the creation of an "examination panel" consisting of the foreign minister, the defense minister, ruling party Diet members elected from Okinawa, and other officials. Their purpose was to convey the local people's sentiments before the Prime Minister makes his decision.

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However, the Okinawan lawmakers and Hatoyama differed in their perceptions of this meeting later.

Kina said: "The Prime Minister said an examination panel will be created. He said that relocation to Henoko or a merger with Kadena Air Base is not a foregone conclusion, and that there are still many options."

The Prime Minister's version was: "I have not said a single word about any option other than Henoko today."

When Upper House member Keiko Itokazu (independent) said to him toward the end of the meeting: "Please do not betray the Okinawan people's expectations for the change of administration," Hatoyama reportedly just kept quiet.

The reason why the Okinawan Diet members wanted to talk directly to Hatoyama is because there is now a growing sense of alarm that the Prime Minister may make a decision on relocation within Okinawa before the end of 2009.

Kina, who is also head of the DPJ's Okinawa chapter, told reporters in a strong tone on Nov. 23: "Conducting negotiations (with the U.S.) without consulting the Okinawa chapter and ignoring (the wishes of) Okinawa is unacceptable." He also said: "If this situation doesn't change, it's like Okinawa is being deceived." The local people have been hopeful because the Prime Minister himself had said clearly during the recent general election campaign that Futenma should "at least be relocated out of Okinawa."

The DPJ Okinawa chapter is worried about the Nago mayoral election in January. The opponents to Henoko relocation have just fielded a common candidate - Susumu Inamine, former education board chairman of the city - on Nov. 18 against the incumbent mayor seeking reelection, Yoshikazu Shimabukuro, who accepts the relocation. The DPJ's Okinawa chapter, along with the Social Democratic Party (SDP) Okinawa chapter and other groups, has already decided to endorse Inamine.

Many supporters of Inamine, consisting mostly of former Mayor Tateo Kishimoto's relatives and support groups, are actually in favor of Henoko relocation. For this reason, Inamine was going to campaign on a review of the existing relocation plan at first. But for the sake of fielding a common candidate for all the relocation opponents, he

has taken one step further and is now saying: "I will not allow the construction of a new military base in Henoko." Inamine's staff say that "we will fight under the slogan of opposition (to Henoko relocation) until the end."

Commenting on this, a senior Okinawa Prefectural Government official who is supporting Shimabukuro said cynically: "If the government decides on relocation within Okinawa before the end of the year, will the Prime Minister come to campaign for the incumbent mayor in the election? If he is giving up on relocation out of Okinawa so soon, we might well ask him to at least do that."

Yasuhiro Arakaki, DPJ Okinawa chapter's secretary general, and other officials said to Governor Hirokazu Nakaima on Nov. 24: "We would like you to ask the Prime Minister to relocate Futenma out of Okinawa. Mr. Hatoyama may do that for us." If Hatoyama decides on relocation within the prefecture before the mayoral election, DPJ officials are certain to be torn between the party's policies in

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Tokyo and in Okinawa. The ruling coalition may also become divided over relocation to the mainland and relocation within Okinawa. Yonekichi Shinzato, SDP Okinawa chapter's secretary general, observes: "In the worst-case scenario, there might be a clamor (for the SDP) to leave the coalition."

Nakaima, who has not changed his position of accepting Henoko relocation in the belief that this is a "realistic" plan, stated at his regular news conference on Nov. 20: "If an opponent to relocation gets elected (in the Nago mayoral election), it will be extremely difficult to implement the relocation." In which case, the gubernatorial election next year, in which Nakaima is seeking reelection, is certain to be affected as well.

After his meeting with the Okinawan Diet members, Hatoyama maintained that he had not made any decision on when to reach a conclusion on Futenma relocation and where the relocation site will be.

However, the concerned ministers have stepped up their efforts to prepare to make a decision before the end of the year while Hatoyama is still trying to make up his mind.

Hatoyama summoned Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada and Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa to the Kantei for two consecutive days on Nov. 19 and 20 to discuss the Futenma issue.

During the meeting, Kitazawa argued that it is necessary to lighten the burden on the Okinawan people to soften their resentment on the assumption that the Futenma base is to be relocated to Henoko. Hatoyama leaned forward and remarked: "Let me say something. I will be the one to draw up the (final) proposal." An informed source observes that "for all intents and purposes" Hatoyama's attitude indicates that "a decision on Henoko relocation will be made before the end of 2009." The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is also looking into ways to reduce Okinawa's burden behind the scenes.

The reason why the Ministry of Defense (MOD) is speeding up the formulation of proposals to reduce the burden is because if Hatoyama decides on Henoko relocation, it will be impossible to placate the Okinawan people without such proposals.

The main focus of these measures is the removal of danger and reduction of noise on the bases. The MOD proposes to spread out the helicopter exercises conducted at Futenma Air Station, as well as transfer the exercises conducted at Kadena Air Base out of Okinawa or reduce their frequency.

With regard to the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement, which is subject to calls for revision, the MOD is also proposing that environmental provisions requiring the U.S. forces to restore the environment to the original state in cases of pollution on the military bases be signed between Japan and the U.S. as special agreements. A senior MOD official says: "We are preparing proposals that will keep the Okinawans people's hope alive."

Regarding economic development measures for Okinawa, which were linked to progress in the U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) realignment process during the Liberal Democratic Party administrations, the Hatoyama administration has drawn the line and said that "they are not linked with the base issues" (Land Minister Seiji Maehara). Plans to continue and expand such measures are being studied.

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Director General Kazuyoshi Umemoto of MOFA's North American Affairs Bureau and Director General Nobushige Takamizawa of the MOD's Defense Policy Bureau left for the U.S. on Nov. 24. They will meet with U.S. officials to seek their understanding of the proposals to lighten Okinawa's burden. If an agreement can be reached at the senior bureaucratic level, the proposals will be presented to the cabinet level working group officially.

It goes without saying that the prerequisite for the U.S. to approve these measures is the acceptance of the Henoko relocation plan. It would seem that the process for the "implementation of the agreement on USFJ realignment in Okinawa," as President Obama put it, is moving forward steadily.

However, the concerned officials are still frustrated because the Prime Minister keeps putting off making a decision. A senior MOFA official points out that "unless the overall policy is spelled out, we are just doing just mental exercises."

The SDP, a coalition partner of the DPJ, is also facing a serious dilemma. With regard to how the party will react if Hatoyama decides on the Henoko relocation plan, party leader Mizuho Fukushima (state minister for consumer affairs and declining birthrate) would only say: "I cannot answer a hypothetical question."

(2) Prime Minister Hatoyama to set up forum for discussion between Uru Association, cabinet ministers concerned on Futenma relocation

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 2) (Full)
November 25, 2009

TOKYO - In connection with the relocation site for the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama clarified yesterday that he will set up a forum for discussion between the cabinet ministers concerned and the Uru no Kai (Uru Association), which is comprised of the ruling parties' Diet members elected from Okinawa Prefecture or from the prefecture. The Uru Association is chaired by House of Councillors member Shokichi Kina. Uru Association members, who have called for establishing a forum to look into the possibility of relocating the Futenma base out of Okinawa or out of Japan, met with Hatoyama at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei). Hatoyama made this decision during the meeting. He did not explicitly say such a meeting will be held regularly, but he said: "It is absolutely necessary (for the Uru Association) to exchange views with the foreign minister, defense minister, and state minister in charge of Okinawa and hold discussions on the issue before reaching a conclusion."

With regard to the relocation site for the Futenma base, Hatoyama said: "In order to look for a fresh idea, we are examining several options." He expressed his willingness to visit Okinawa, saying, "I would like to visit Okinawa although I have yet to decide when." He also revealed that he would meet with Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima when he visits Okinawa.

Last evening at the Kantei, after revealing that Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano and Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada are expected to visit Okinawa, Hatoyama said to reporters: "I think I cannot go there before they visit."

Uru Association members told Hatoyama that they would like to state

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their views at a meeting of the ministerial-level working group (WG), but Hatoyama said: "Working group meetings will be held

between Japan and the United States. I will deal with the issue in a responsible manner so that your wishes can be transmitted to the WG."

After the meeting, Kina said: "Okinawa has been kept out of the loop since the SACO agreement was reached. So, I asked the Prime Minister to reflect the voice of (Okinawa) without making the same mistake. The Prime Minister responded to our request faithfully."

(3) Editorial: Obama's Asia tour - Tolerance of China's military expansion is regrettable

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 19, 2009

The U.S. President will wrap up his weeklong Asian tour on Nov. 19, with his last visit to South Korea. In China, President Obama and President Hu Jintao agreed to strengthen their strategic relationship and cooperate on global issues.

It is only proper for the United States to promote cooperative relations with China, which has grown to become a great power, attaching priority to Asia. However, there is concern that regional and global stability will be undermined if the United States and China, now called the G-2, only pursue their national interests.

This is because the U.S. side seems to have refrained from getting to crucial global issues as the U.S.-China talks proceeded at China's pace. The joint statement did not mention the manipulation of China's currency, the yuan; violation of intellectual property rights; or the suppression of human rights and democratization. The same is true for the issue of minorities in Tibet and Uighur.

In connection with environment issues, the two countries, the top two carbon-dioxide emitters, failed to come up with emission reduction targets. China has opposed setting targets, asserting that economic development in developing countries, including China, should not be impeded. The United States appears to have tolerated this.

What we are concerned about is the fact that President Obama did not call on China, which has continued its military buildup, for self-control and the transparency of military spending. The joint Obama-Hu statement praised a visit to the U.S. (in October) by Xu Caihou, vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, and advocated strengthening cooperative relations through mutual visits by the two leaders and exchanges of officials at all levels.

Prior to President Obama's China visit, the United States came out with a new strategy - strategic security - calling for China to share responsibility. In line with the new strategy, Obama in his speech in Tokyo stated that the United States has no intention of containing China.

Behind the Obama administration's new policy are its high expectations that China will play a role in carrying out aid measures for Afghanistan and Pakistan and antipiracy measures. The Chinese side, however, interprets the policy as American approval of its military buildup and construction of a blue-water navy. As a result, the risk of accelerating an arms race among China, India

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(which has territorial disputes with China), and Southeast Asia will heighten.

This is a critical issue for Japan because one can say that the United States is shifting its weight to China in order to deal with global issues, although it has considered the Japan-U.S. security arrangements as the linchpin of its Asia strategy. Japan should strengthen the alliance with the U.S. and prevent the G-2 from becoming a solo act. There is no time to waver.

(4) Editorial: Assistance to farmers that separates them from the world will be futile

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

November 23, 2009

The Yukio Hatoyama administration has decided to set up a farm household compensation system, under which the government will directly compensate farmers' incomes. As part of such an effort, the government will implement model case projects on a priority basis starting in 2010, targeting rice farmers. This is an opportunity made possible as a result of the change in government to drastically reform agricultural policy. However, the specifics of the system must be examined carefully.

Japan's agriculture is in a critical situation. The amount of abandoned farmland has reached almost twice the land area of Tokyo. Japan's food self-sufficiency rate in calorie terms stands at approximately 40 percent, which is markedly low among industrialized countries. Agriculture is an important industry that supports people's diet. The Hatoyama administration's perception that it is imperative to reform agriculture is not wrong.

Isn't the proposal simply an election strategy?

What we do not understand is why the government is rushing to extend support to rice farmers alone? According to the Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ) manifesto, the party was supposed to introduce the system in fiscal 2011. We do not envisage the implementation of the system ahead of schedule as anything else but a political calculation with an eye on next year's Upper House election.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) has requested approximately 560 billion yen for the introduction of the new system as necessary funds in the fiscal 2010 budget. The system could become a pork-barrel policy that strongly resembles an effort to curry favor with farmers if the administration moves ahead with the system with the Upper House election in mind.

The proposal submitted by Agriculture Minister Hirotaka Akamatsu has several serious defects. First, the new system offers no hope of generating the effect of structural reform, namely enhancing agricultural productivity.

The idea of compensation for farming households itself is correct. It is a system in which the government compensates farmers' incomes with direct subsidies in the event that sales prices of agricultural products are higher than their production costs. The World Trade Organization's (WTO) international rules approve this system as a way to protect farmers while having little impact on global trade.

If the system is implemented along the lines suggested, it would

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serve as a measure to support agriculture with little negative impact compared with measures in which imports of agricultural products are blocked by high tariffs, thereby leaving the prices of domestic products high. The global trend of agricultural policy is to support farmers financially instead of artificially lowering prices.

The problem is how to apply such a method. MAFF plans to target about 1.8 million farm households throughout the nation by increasing the number of farmers eligible for the assistance. Under this system, not only full-time farm households and large agricultural production corporations but also small part-time households can receive subsidies.

As such, some part-time farmers will continue to grow rice just for subsidies while simultaneously working as salaried workers. They would hang onto their inefficient farmland, hampering the consolidation of farmland under large-scale farmers in the form of leasing.

The second problem is that consumers or taxpayers could bear the brunt of the new system. If the new system increases the fiscal burden because of income compensation paid to farmers, while food prices remain as is, its economic advantage to the people as a whole would be minimal.

The new system assumes farmers' participation in production adjustments (government-arranged reductions in rice cultivation), as a condition for them to receive subsidies. Production adjustments are aimed at reducing supplies according to the plan, thereby raising the prices of farm products. The government has spent fiscal funds on these subsidies totaling approximately 7 trillion yen over the past several years.

However, this policy has created harmful effects. Farmers' eagerness to produce agricultural goods has declined. Farmland has been abandoned. The nation's food self-sufficiency rate has dropped. High trade tariffs are now under fire in the international community. Japan finds itself in a disadvantageous position in trade liberalization talks. The production adjustments were clearly the wrong approach.

In the European Union (EU) and the U.S., agricultural policies of combining income compensation to farmers and reduced prices of farm products have been successful. They have managed to lower the prices of farm products and reduce trade tariffs and export subsidies by leaving price-setting for the market to work out.

Take a second look at production adjustments

To begin with, production adjustments designed to increase the prices of farm products and direct compensation intended to reduce such prices are, in principle, contradictory. It appears that the system envisaged by the Hatoyama administration is intended to combine both by the strong hand. If the system is adopted with contradictions left unsolved, it will collapse soon or later.

Given the reality of Japanese agriculture - high production costs and lack of international competitiveness in price terms, it is not possible to deny the intention of the government to protect farm households. However, by segregating domestic agriculture from the global market, it will be impossible to revitalize Japanese agriculture

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while continuing to protect it. It is necessary to build a new system in the direction of creating a future both for global and Japanese agriculture.

Deputy Prime Minister and State Minister for National Policy Naoto Kan has indicated a policy direction of making this system a target of screening for budgetary cuts. Given the critical fiscal situation, this is an inevitable decision. The government should cautiously discuss ways to narrow down targets eligible for income compensation without regarding the area as a sacred cow.

Among the various policy proposals included in the manifesto, the idea of income compensation for farm households, in comparison with toll-free highways or child allowances, does not sit well with urban workers. However, agricultural policy does not concern only those involved in agriculture, such as farm households, agricultural cooperatives, and the farm policy clique in the Diet. It is a policy that concerns the foundation of food safety and security, the cost of living of the people as a whole, and economic diplomacy.

As long as the government takes into account the massive fiscal burden involved, it should facilitate farmland reform in a manner acceptable to both taxpayers and consumers.

(5) Sankei-FNN poll on Hatoyama cabinet, political parties

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
November 24, 2009

Questions & Answers

(Note) Figures are percentages. Figures in parentheses are percentages in the previous Sankei-FNN survey, conducted Oct. 17-18.

Q: Do you support the Hatoyama cabinet?

Yes 62.5 (60.9)

No 22.9 (20.7)
Don't know (D/K), etc. 14.6 (18.4)

Q: Which political party do you support?

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 39.7 (40.6)
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP or Jiminto) 17.3 (18.9)
New Komeito (NK or Komeito) 4.5 (3.6)
Japanese Communist Party (JCP or Kyosanto) 3.2 (2.7)
Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) 3.0 (1.3)
People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) 0.9 (0.5)
Your Party (YP or Minna no To) 3.8 (2.3)
New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) 0.2 (0.0)
Other political parties 0.4 (0.5)
None 26.5 (28.5)
D/K, etc. 0.5 (1.1)

Q: Do you have high expectations for the Hatoyama cabinet on the following points?

The prime minister's personal character

Yes 70.0 (71.0)
No 20.2 (15.6)
D/K, etc. 9.8 (13.4)

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The prime minister's leadership

Yes 34.7 (41.5)
No 46.0 (28.5)
D/K, etc. 19.3 (30.0)

The prime minister's idea of yuai (fraternity)

Yes 51.9 (-----)
No 30.8 (-----)
D/K, etc. 17.3 (-----)

The prime minister's East Asian Community initiative

Yes 53.0 (-----)
No 21.1 (-----)
D/K, etc. 25.9 (-----)

Diet steering

Yes 41.6 (-----)
No 37.5 (-----)
D/K, etc. 20.9 (-----)

Futenma relocation in Okinawa

Yes 22.8 (-----)
No 56.0 (-----)
D/K, etc. 21.2 (-----)

Appointment of a former administrative vice minister as Japan Post president

Yes 25.2 (-----)
No 60.3 (-----)
D/K, etc. 14.5 (-----)

The prime minister's political fund problem

Yes 18.8 (-----)
No 64.8 (-----)
D/K, etc. 16.4 (-----)

Policy concerning amakudari (the practice of giving retired bureaucrats positions at public corporations or private businesses)

Yes 48.4 (-----)
No 40.5 (-----)
D/K, etc. 11.1 (-----)

Teamwork

Yes 43.3 (46.8)
No 44.8 (29.7)
D/K, etc. 11.9 (23.5)

Q: What would you like the Hatoyama cabinet to pursue on a priority basis?

Economic stimulus measures 25.6
Childcare support, education 14.9
Social security, including healthcare and pension system 20.4
Foreign, security policies 2.0
Cutting wasteful spending 23.6
Fiscal turnaround 5.1
Political reform 2.2
Diet reform 1.4
Dealing with global warming 3.4
D/K, etc. 1.4

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Q: Who do you think is the Hatoyama cabinet's key person?

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama 18.3
Deputy Prime Minister & National Strategy Minister Naoto Kan 5.5
Administrative Reform Minister Yoshito Sengoku 1.4
Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada 4.4
Finance Minister Hirohisa Fujii 1.5
Health, Labor & Welfare Minister Akira Nagatsuma 5.9
Land, Infrastructure & Transport Minister Seiji Maehara 4.8
Financial Services & Postal Reform Minister Shizuka Kamei 6.8
Other cabinet ministers 1.0
DPJ Secretary Ichiro Ozawa 41.9
Other ruling party lawmakers 0.2
LDP President Sadakazu Tanigaki 1.5
Other opposition party lawmakers 1.4
D/K, etc. 5.4

Q: What do you think about the Hatoyama cabinet?

The Hatoyama cabinet is meeting the public's expectations from the general election

Yes 60.3
No 32.5
D/K, etc. 7.2

The Hatoyama cabinet is exerting its political leadership over bureaucrats

Yes 50.2
No 40.9
D/K, etc. 8.9

The Hatoyama cabinet is speedy in getting things done

Yes 54.0
No 37.8
D/K, etc. 8.2

Do you have high expectations for the SDP's voice in the Hatoyama cabinet?

Yes 32.6
No 60.7
D/K, etc. 6.7

Do you have high expectations for the PNP's voice in the Hatoyama cabinet?

Yes 21.1
No 70.6
D/K, etc. 8.3

Do you have high expectations for DPJ Secretary General Ozawa's leadership?

Yes 38.0
No 53.8
D/K, etc. 8.2

Q: Do you think the DPJ should uphold its manifesto without fail?

The DPJ should do so 8.5 (9.0)
The DPJ should do its best to do so, but it can't be helped if it fails to carry out some of the pledges in its manifesto 40.7 (38.8)
The DPJ should flexibly translate its policies into action without being bound to its pledges 50.3 (50.6)
D/K, etc. 0.5 (1.6)

Q: Do you think the DPJ should translate the following policies into action?

Toll-free expressways

Yes 19.3 (19.5)

No 77.3 (72.8)

D/K, etc. 3.4 (7.7)

Abolition of provisional gasoline tax rates

Yes 54.4 (57.1)

No 37.5 (29.3)

D/K, etc. 8.1 (13.6)

Environmental taxation on fossil fuels

Yes 58.7 (-----)

No 29.3 (-----)

D/K, etc. 12.0 (-----)

Raising tobacco tax

Yes 64.6 (-----)

No 30.2 (-----)

D/K, etc. 5.2 (-----)

Issuing deficit-covering bonds to carry out public pledges

Yes 24.6 (24.5)

No 66.0 (60.2)

D/K, etc. 9.4 (15.3)

Suffrage for foreign nationals with permanent resident status

Yes 53.9 (-----)

No 34.4 (-----)

D/K, etc. 11.7 (-----)

Separate surnames for married couples

Yes 46.1 (-----)

No 44.2 (-----)

D/K, etc. 9.7 (-----)

Relocation of the U.S. military's Futenma airfield outside Okinawa Prefecture

Yes 46.2 (45.1)

No 36.1 (29.1)

D/K, etc. 17.7 (25.8)

Ban on bureaucrats' replies before the Diet

Yes 36.0 (39.9)

No 46.8 (35.7)

D/K, etc. 17.2 (24.4)

Q: What do you think about the DPJ's child allowance plan in its manifesto?

It should be provided across the board as pledged 19.3

It should be based on income 64.1

There's no need for it 15.6

D/K, etc. 1.0

Q: What do you think about the Hatoyama cabinet's budget screening?

The screening panel is helping to ferret out the government's wasteful spending

Yes 88.7

No 7.6

D/K, etc. 3.7

Are you interested in then screening panel's open discussions?

Yes 79.1

No 15.9

D/K, etc. 5.0

The screening panel's discussions are appropriate

Yes 43.2

No 41.5

D/K, etc. 15.3

The screening panel's authority and responsibility are unclear

Yes 67.9

No 21.9

D/K, etc. 10.2

Budget screening should be conducted annually

Yes 85.2

No 10.0

D/K, etc. 4.8

Q: Would you like the ruling or opposition parties to win next year's election for the House of Councillors?

The DPJ and other ruling parties 64.3 (59.0)

The LDP and other opposition parties 27.7 (32.9)

D/K, etc. 8.0 (8.1)

Polling methodology: The survey was conducted Nov. 21-22 by the Sankei Shimbun and Fuji News Network (FNN) over the telephone on a computer-aided random digit dialing (RDD) basis. For the survey, a total of 1,000 persons were sampled from among men and women, aged 20 and over, across the nation.

(6) Japan, U.S. to ink aviation liberalization accord before end of year: First step to competition

ASAHI (Page 7) (Excerpts)

November 25, 2005

Strong prospects appeared that Japan and the U.S. will sign an open skies agreement before year's end. Under this agreement, air carriers can set flights routes and the number of flights at their discretion. This was announced by Transport Minister Seiji Maehara at a press conference on Nov. 24. The spread of open skies agreements throughout the world has been urging the aviation industry to undergo restructuring. The power distribution of the aviation industry will likely undergo a change. The situation could influence Japan Airlines' restructuring program as well.

Increase in landing and departure slots at Haneda Airport as opportunity

The governments of Japan and the U.S. will hold a working-level meeting early next month. They will likely sign an open skies agreement at the meeting.

Regarding the flight network between the two countries, the governments of both countries set, in principle, flight routes in

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accordance with the Convention on International Civil Aviation, usually referred to as the Chicago Convention. Once Japan and the U.S. sign the open skies agreement, U.S. anti-monopoly officials view that a competitive environment has now been secured. No matter how much air carriers of both countries deepen their tie-ups, they will most likely obtain antitrust immunity (ATI). Under the open skies agreement, air carriers can adjust duplicated flight routes and the number of flights with their partner carriers. This would certainly enhance their competitiveness.

Japan, on the other hand, is taking a cautious stance toward signing such an accord with a senior transport ministry official noting, "If Japan and the U.S. sign an open skies agreement, U.S.-led competition would become intensive, putting Japan at a disadvantage."

Because of the completion of a new runway, the number of landing and departure slots at Haneda Airport will increase by 60,000 per year and 20,000 per year at Narita Airport. This has created room for the interests of Japan and the U.S. to converge. This is not true

liberalization. However, Japan intends to facilitate easier access to the aviation business, by continuing to strengthen capacities at those airports. Landing and departure slots allotted to overseas carriers' midnight and early morning flights at Haneda is to be boosted by 20 per day, starting in October next year. The U.S. is eager to obtain additional slots. The Japanese government plans to allocate a certain number of landing and departure slots at Haneda Airport to the U.S. However, it intends to curb such a number, when slots at Narita Airport are increased in March next year.

The government is expected to allow carriers to increase or launch flights to and from the U.S. using domestic airports other than Narita and Haneda, such as Kansai Airport.

(7) Japanese wife of deceased U.S. soldier trying to immigrate to U.S. faces legal hurdle

SANKEI ONLINE (Full)
08:05, November 25, 2009

Michiya Matsuo in Maryville, Tennessee

A Japanese woman from Okinawa whose U.S. marine husband died in the Iraq war shortly after they got married and who wants to immigrate to the U.S. to raise their child in accordance with her husband's wishes has been refused permanent residence in America based on the U.S. immigration law. Her husband's parents and the U.S. forces are making every effort to obtain residence rights for her at present, but prospects for a solution to this problem remain dim. However, this woman is determined and says she will not give up. What makes her take up an option that is much more difficult than remaining in Japan?

This woman is Hotaru Nakama Ferschke, 26. She met Michael Ferschke, who was then a marine stationed in Okinawa in spring 2007 and they began to date.

Michael later volunteered to go to Iraq and at the same time, he proposed to Hotaru. After Michael left Okinawa, they completed the paperwork and got married officially in July 2008 even though they were living separately. Shortly after that, Michael was attacked and killed while searching a house in the suburbs of Baghdad. He was

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Filled with sorrow, Hotaru went to Michael's hometown in Maryville, Tennessee for his funeral. She decided then to immigrate to America and raise the baby she was pregnant with in the U.S.

"All the people in the community were present to witness the funeral from the roadside. I felt that Michael is a hero. I decided that I would like to raise my child in the land where everybody pays respect to Michael."

For Hotaru, who came from Japan, where the reality of war does not feel real, it was a very intense experience. Hotaru gave birth to a baby boy, Mikey in Okinawa last January and went to Tennessee in February.

She was surprised by the legal hurdle she faced. The U.S. immigration law stipulates that for the spouse to obtain permanent residence rights, there needs to be actual married life after marriage.

Robin, 48, Hotaru's mother-in-law who eagerly wishes for her to immigrate to the U.S., says: "It is a matter of course that a soldier who has given his life for the country should be given utmost respect. Everything is being negated for just one provision in the immigration law." The two are lobbying with members of Congress to enact a "personal law" on special provisions applying to specific individuals and have received a positive response.

Hotaru says that when Mikey grows up, "I would like to tell him your father was an awesome man."

Her tourist visa expires in February 2010.

ZUMWALT